

of extra money in circulation," she said. "We happened to be in the right place at the right time. We had a large inventory and were willing to work night and day to help with their furniture needs. The bottom line was business was good."

Gabbard and two other women continued making draperies, and Ryser hired her family to do everything else.

"It wasn't too long before Kandy was at the store," she said. "Bo was helping. I'd go out to the high school and Harold Storm was the principal. I'd say, 'Can Bo go with us?' And he'd say, 'How many do you want, Toni?' He'd give me two or three boys and so off we'd go with a truck full of furniture and drapes to hang."

Once arriving at their destination, Ryser would work her magic, attending to every last detail in a room.

"We did everything," she said. "We moved their old furniture until it looked nice, we put the new pieces in that they really needed. You set up and then you don't want to see a little lamp on the floor, you don't want to leave a picture hanging over here when it should have gone over there, so you just start doing it."

Once the home owner arrived home, the room would be completely transformed, with the pieces they knew they were buying accompanied by their existing furniture and a few extras that rounded out the space. The effect was enchanting, with all the parts seamlessly coming together to make the whole.

Her eye for design was flawless, with one customer who dealt in antiques asking her what she thought about his plan to mass produce the look of an antique table. Her opinion was so valuable to him that he called it the Mrs. Ryser table, which to this day is still being sold.

Word traveled fast, with the Rysers name soon extending throughout Kentucky and spreading down into Tennessee and Florida.

Ryser was having a ball and was on the road every day, telling her children, "If we are in the store, we aren't making money." Indeed, given its remote location, the store was always meant to be more of a warehouse than a space for customers to shop.

When Bo was in college, she said she "saw she had too much to handle" and the flooring side of the business was getting neglected, "so I told my son, 'If you want to buy the business, it's here for you.'"

He did. Kandy, meanwhile, had her own set of customers, and Kim, after graduating from Eastern Kentucky University's school of design, joined her siblings. Even her mother Carrie had a hand in things.

"Mother would come down and would tell them a thing or two about drapes. It was her way or no way," she laughed. "But Ruth, she never one time get upset that mother tried to boss. Ruth is a wonderful person, that was her nature."

Business continued to grow, with customers by now all over the country. In the 1990s, Ryser was named Kentucky's retailer of the year.

Though she stayed constantly busy, "thinking nothing of going in at midnight or one in the morning," Sundays were reserved for church and family.

To this day, she remains one of the most faithful members of East Bernstadt Baptist Church, with Pastor Norm Brock joking the only way to keep Ryser at home on a snowy, icy Sunday morning is to cancel church.

"I feel like God has walked beside me my whole life, my whole life," she said. "I like to give credit where it's due and it's definitely not due me."

Every Sunday evening, she would cook a sprawling family dinner.

"We had a ball," she said. "They would bring their dates, their friends and this

house would fill up from that end to this end. We'd all settle down in my kitchen and there weren't enough seats and all we'd do is discuss all the fun we'd had all week."

In 1992, she and R.D. decided to build a new house on the land on which he was born and, since they'd enjoyed their first home so much, decided to replicate the floor plan to the letter. She continues to live there.

In 2003, R.D. suffered a stroke and Ryser left the store to take care of him. She returned to work after he died a year later, but in 2006 Ryser also had a stroke. She's taken a back seat to the business for the past five years. But she continues to be active and last spring took a few months off from her regular Body Recall aerobics class to redecorate for a friend who was wintering in Florida but needed her Lexington home completely redone in time for Derby. She only trusted Ryser to do it.

Looking back, Ryser's eyes light up while talking about the excitement of the business and become moist when talking about her faith and family. When asked if she's proud of what she's accomplished, she shakes her head and sits up in her overstuffed chair.

"I'm proud of my family," she said. "I don't feel proud of myself. I've enjoyed it. I enjoyed it a lot."

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

SOPHIA, WEST VIRGINIA

• **Mr. ROCKEFELLER.** Mr. President, today I wish to bring attention to a small town in my home State. Sophia, WV, began its 100-year anniversary celebration on June 2, 2012, and will hold a litany of festive events throughout most of the summer.

Many of you present today will recall that Sophia is the town our dear friend and colleague, Senator Robert C. Byrd, so often referred to when he spoke of his home among the hills. This beautiful community served as his and Erma's haven for much of their lives.

The town of Sophia is reportedly named for Sophia Gravley McGinnis, who was born 200 years ago, in 1812. Mrs. McGinnis and her husband, Pyrrhus McGinnis, owned nearly 2,000 acres of land in and around the area according to the family's historical documents. Sophia became the first official citizen and its endeared namesake when the town incorporated in 1912. She went on to live to the ripe age of 104 years old and died in March of 1916. She is buried near Flat Top, WV.

Many times over, Senator Byrd reflected on his and Erma's time in Sophia, fondly remembering the friendships and once-bustling economy. Historically, the town of Sophia was known as the epicenter of the Winding Gulf region where countless tons of coal have been mined and transported all over the world via the extensive rail network intersecting the region.

Senator Byrd is certainly Sophia's favorite son. The memories he shared so freely with all of us act as a reminder of the importance of coal and its far-reaching impact on the State of West Virginia and our Nation. They also bring to mind the tremendous character of the people who helped cre-

ate those memories and how they helped guide him in his duties as the longest serving member of the Congress.

Unfortunately, as with many towns across our great land, Sophia fell on hard times for a number of years. With the march of technology and the mechanization of the coal industry, fewer men were needed to mine coal and service the railroads, causing Sophia's population to quickly dwindle. Grocers and markets and small shops began to close their doors. Schools helping to educate the children of Sophia were consolidated. The town soon became a shell of its former glory.

However, like other parts of West Virginia that have experienced decline, the citizens of the town of Sophia never gave up. Their story continues today and proves to be a testament of the talented and dedicated residents living there. Many of the efforts to revitalize this rural village have resulted in enormous success. Economic development initiatives have culminated in a bright future for Sophia that includes an economy of growth and a renewal of the spirit that lies deep within the hearts of the people Senator Byrd held in such high regard.

Evidence of the revitalization in the town of Sophia includes the opening of the Affinity Coal mining operation and the regular passage of railcars once again full of coal. Burning Rock Outdoor Adventure Park is bringing visitors from all across the Nation and the rich heritage of the coal industry is creating new tourism proposals and interest in the studies of mine safety and engineering. The young men and women of Sophia are no longer forced to leave their homes to find gainful employment because opportunities are once again available to them and their families.

All of these measures bring me to the floor to recognize what should be considered a shining example of dedication and commitment in times of hardship and adversity. On behalf of the people of the town of Sophia, it brings me great pride to present this statement in recognition of a community spirit that has fostered ongoing transformation, while always holding true to a history rich with fortitude.●

FEDERAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION REPORT

Derek J. Mitchell, of Connecticut, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Union of Burma, discharged from the Committee on Foreign Relations and confirmed by the Senate on June 29, 2012:

Nominee: Derek J. Mitchell.

Post: Burma.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee: